

Court Appointed Special Advocate Newsletter

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A CHILD'S VOICE IN COURT

JOSH SCREAMS: RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR VERY YOUNG EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED CHILDREN

By Jennifer Reed-Morse, CASA Volunteer

**The child's name has been changed to protect his identity. Josh is a big, husky child for his age. He has thick, brown hair, deep brown eyes and olive skin. He was only two years old when Child Protective Services removed him and his siblings because their mother and her boyfriend sexually abused them. He has been in care almost over a year and a half. Initially, Josh was in a shelter for two months while his relatives waited to be approved as a placement for all the children. After they took him home from the shelter, Josh had fits of rage that could last hours. He screamed at people, called them names, he would run into the backyard going no where and he was violent when touched during a rage. The relatives learned to recognize his Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personality. He is the most darling little boy until the dark affect comes over his face and he begins screaming. No one knows why he begins screaming but we do know that he is not well attached to any adult, that he is very angry at his mother, that he is confused about what is happening to him and that his grief is deep. The relative placement learned to handle Josh to avoid the screaming but it is a game of cat and mouse that wears them down emotionally. However, day care is an uncontrollable situation. If only all that screaming had made anything better for Josh, but as his mother's mental health deteriorates and the visits along with it, Josh only feels more pain. His foster family became desperate. The day care was calling them all the time because he was out of control. He peed on his teacher, he threw things around the room, he ran around wildly, he was violent toward anyone who came near him and he screamed through it all. His behavior frightened the other children, the parents and his teachers. Josh was within days of being thrown out of day care. The foster mom works*

and she was terrified that she would have nowhere to take him during the day. He is not old enough to be treated in a hospital or a group home. If Josh's day care disrupted causing him to lose his placement, he would have to go back to the shelter. The adorable little boy would be an emotional cripple and he would only scream more as his pain multiplied from yet another loss. He had finally attached to his foster dad. The family did not want him to move but they did not know how much longer they could go on. The case worker and I pleaded with the day care for more time and promised the family we would get help. Josh had been in therapy for several months but the therapist was inconsistent and it was not helping him. At a case plan staffing we brain-stormed a massive intervention effort to save Josh from himself. The following resources are what we found:

SERVICES PROVIDED IN A DES LICENSED DAY CARE

Sunrise Preschool is part of a large corporate chain of schools in the Valley and Josh attended one of their schools. They have a special education coordinator who works directly with the children in the school. This service costs extra money but DES does have a special fund for preschool services. The coordinator sets goals for the child and tasks to work on. She goes into the child's classroom to work with the child and she can take the child out for special attention, or both. The coordinator can provide a wide range of services for a variety of special needs. In Josh's case, she works on anger management strategies and sits outside with him when he is in a fit of rage. The preschool teacher received the break she needed but Josh still needed more.

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**If you have been a CASA for 2 years or more and would like to learn how you can become a mentor, please contact your CASA Coordinator.*

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BEHAVIOR TECH SERVICES

In the public school, emotionally handicapped children over age five may be eligible for behavior tech services. The behavior tech is part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and the public school must provide one if the child needs it. A behavior tech works one-on-one with the child in their classroom. Since Josh is too young for public school, the case worker requested a behavior tech through ComCare. The service can take place wherever the child is having difficulty, in the school or in the home, unless it is provided by the public school. Then it is only offered at school.

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

A Crisis Intervention Team is called during the event and they will come to the scene to assist in managing the situation. This did not work for us. Josh was in a day care and there was nowhere to work with him without disrupting other classes. I had concerns about strangers attempting to handle a very fragile and very young child. My preference was to put in place professionals that he could get to know and trust. A Crisis Team is more appropriate for in-home intervention. If Josh had been home, his relatives would have been there and he would not be left with strangers during his breakdown. Ultimately, we did not use this service, but EMPACT provides it.

FEDERALLY FUNDED/MANDATED SPECIAL NEEDS PRESCHOOL IN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

We decided to find out if Josh qualified for a preschool for disabled children. The Federal Government requires public schools to educate disabled children between the ages of 3-21. For information, contact The Arizona Center for Disability Law at 274-6287. They have a free four-hour training on the law governing special education, a hotline to ask questions and many free publications that are extremely useful. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has an Exceptional Student Service Division. ADE's website is excellent: <http://internet.ade.state.az.us>. ADE has brochures on the developmental stages so you can monitor your child's progress. Call ADE at 1-800-352-4558 and ask for the "Every Step Counts" Information.

Foster kids are at risk for so many emotional and developmental difficulties that preschool screening is generally a good idea. Josh's placement did not disrupt. He spent a wonderful Christmas with relatives who love him and are committed to keeping him until the case is resolved. They report that he is a different child now. He is learning to take a deep breath and ask for help. The screaming still happens, but it is a little less often and a little quieter. I supervised a visit with his mother in December, which went better than any visit I have ever seen. Josh was getting nervous and anxious about leaving, but instead of screaming he asked me for the reassurance

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that he needed. Josh has a long difficult journey ahead of him. However, with time and assistance I believe he will make it. The best news is that Josh has an adoptive home anxiously waiting for him.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CASA Til Dunlop shared information on the following upcoming legislation: **SB 1011 - The Special License Plates; Child Abuse Prevention** - Legislation sponsored by Senator Tom Freestone - Child Abuse Prevention Arizona, would allow for a special child abuse prevention license plate. License plates would cost \$25, of which \$17 would be placed in a fund administered by the Governor's Division for Children. Monies would be used to contract with a statewide non-profit entity to promote primary child abuse prevention programs and increase public awareness. Please contact the main switchboard at 542-4221 for more information.

LET'S GO TO THE THEATER!

Phoenix Theater's Children's Theater, The Cookie Company, is making available to our CASA children ten seats for each performance of this year's season. Two-weeks advance notice is required and availability is on a first-come-first-serve basis. If you are interested in this final performance, please call the Phoenix Theater box office at (602)254-2151. Tickets will be released for sale 15 minutes prior to curtain if they are not picked up.

Heidi - March 23, 1999 - Tues. 7 p.m. Preview

MENTOR ARIZONA

Become part of a professional team and enjoy the benefits of working at home caring for an individual with disabilities.

A mentor provides: Excellent training; Professional support Emergency on-call personnel; Competitive income; Monthly respite is available.

Requirements: A spare bedroom; Fingerprint clearance; Be at least 21 years of age; Care and commitment.

For more information contact Mentor Arizona at (602)200-9494.

THIRD ANNUAL CASA VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENT

Join CASA volunteers and staff on Thursday, April 29th at the Orange Tree Resort for the Third Annual CASA Volunteer Recognition Event. Come and enjoy food, friends, fun and FEEL APPRECIATED!

Look for details in the April Newsletter. See you there!

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CASA SPONSORED TRAINING

March 9, 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m., Brown Bag Legislative Update Session - Spend an hour learning how upcoming legislation will affect your CASA children and all dependent children in Maricopa County. Paula Wright, Program Associate for the Child Welfare Project at Children's Action Alliance, will talk about legislation that addresses the following issues: Subsidized Permanent Guardianship, Group Home legislation, Foster Care; Children's Rights, Child Welfare, Accountability, Open Communications, Adoptions, and Confidentiality, CPS Records, among other bills. Paula will also give us advocacy tips! Join us for the legislative update at 4001 N. Third Street, Ste. 160. There is room for 25 so call early to reserve a space and don't forget to bring your lunch. RSVP by March 5, to the CASA Office at 506-4083.

March 12 & 13, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Court Appointed Special Advocate Training - New Volunteer Orientation Training is going to be held at Arizona Courts Building, 1501 W. Washington, Room 119. If you know of someone who would like to become a volunteer, please ask them to call the CASA Office at 506-4083 to begin the screening process.

March 18, 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Post Orientation Training - Attend follow-up training to the basic CASA Orientation. Topics covered will include Duties and Responsibilities of a CASA volunteer, case planning and court report writing, Title 19 eligibility and Model Court. All volunteers are welcome to come as a review or plan to attend the Model Court portion beginning at 7:45 p.m. Location: Juvenile Court Southeast Facility, 1810 S. Lewis Street, Mesa, Saguaro Room. Please RSVP by March 12 to the CASA Office 506-4083.

March 21 or March 24, Peer Group Meeting with Dana Gilroy - Mentor Dana Gilroy will be hosting a peer group for CASA volunteers at her home in Ahwatukee. Please call Dana to RSVP for either Sunday, March 21 or Wednesday, March 24. Dana's phone number can be obtained from the CASA Volunteer Directory.

March 31, 1:00 p.m., Peer Group Meeting with Angela Ashley - Mentor Angela Ashley plans to have Peer Group Meetings at her home the last Wednesday of every month. Peer Groups are open to everyone.

COMMUNITY SPONSORED TRAINING

March 18-21, Community Development Academy -
Sponsor: Community Development Program Social Science Unit, College of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources. For more information on this training please contact: 1-800-545-2604. Location: St. Louis, Missouri. Cost: \$450.00, \$525.00 (3 hours undergraduate or graduate credit).

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CONFERENCES

March 21-24, 26th National Conference on Juvenile Justice - Registration is open to: Judges, Prosecutors, Police, Juvenile Officers, Probation Officers, CASAs, Guardians ad Litem and all interested groups and persons. Location: Minneapolis, Minnesota. If you are interested in this conference please call (703)549-9222 for more information.

May 15 - 18, 18th Annual National CASA Conference -
The conference will include more than 50 sessions, workshops, round table discussions and presentations from national experts. Location: Kansas City, Missouri. For more information contact Becca Calhoun at National CASA, 100 W. Harrison, North Tower, Ste. 500, Seattle, WA 98119, or E-mail: becca@nationalcasa.org or call (800) 628-3233. You can also visit the National Web page at <http://www.casanet.org>.

COMMENDATIONS

*CASA Volunteer **Elaine Casey** was commended for her thorough report by Commissioner Willett. Great job Elaine!*

*The Foster Care Review Board “commends the CASA Volunteer **Uri Schumm** and social worker for their diligent effort to advocate for this CASA child.”*

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU!

We're sorry to see CASA Volunteer **Avery Crossman** leave the program but understand that sometimes life changes and leaves little time for volunteering. Thanks Avery for your good work as a CASA.

*Farewell and thank you to CASA Volunteer **Virginia Wurtz**. The CASA Program and your assigned CASA children have benefitted from your advocacy. Virginia says Big Brother/Sister Program has contact with the case manager and will help transition kids to a less restrictive placement when the time comes. Thanks for all you did Virginia!*

*Farewell to CASA Volunteer **Lisa Sleezer**. She and her family are relocating to Navajo County. Lisa has advocated for her five CASA children for over a year and has done an excellent job. Lisa has enjoyed being a CASA and is thankful for the wonderful opportunity to "Speak up for Arizona's Children." Thanks Lisa and good Luck!*



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

The CASA office is asking that if you have something that you would like to see in the newsletter to please forward it. We are especially interested in articles pertaining to dependent children's issues. If you have any questions, please contact your coordinator or the support staff at 506-4083.

March 1999						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 <i>Brown Bag Legislative Update Session 12 noon -1:00 pm 4001 N. 3rd St., Ste 160 RSVP by 3-5 506-4083</i>	10	11	12 <i>New Volunteer Orientation Training 8:00 -5:00 1501 W. Washington</i>	13 <i>New Volunteer Orientation Training 8:00 -5:00 1501 W. Washington</i>
14	15	16	17	18 <i>Post Orientation Training 5:30 -8:30 Juvenile Court -SEF 1810 S. Lewis Street. RSVP by 3-12 506-4083</i>	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 <i>Peer Group w/Angela Ashley - 1:00 p.m. RSVP to Angela</i>	Peer Group Meeting with Dana Gilroy will be held on Sunday, March 21 or Wednesday, March 24, depending on the response. Please RSVP to Dana. <i>*Phone numbers for volunteers can be obtained from the volunteer directory, that were mailed out with last month's newsletter. If you have not received a copy, please call the CASA Office at 506-4083</i>		

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RESOURCES

Working with Traumatized Children: A Handbook for Healing by Kathryn Brohl. Simply written and practical in orientation, this book offers an effective, step-by-step process for healing and shows how, by responsibly supporting, guiding, and/or treating a traumatized child, you can change that child's life.

To purchase "Working with Traumatized Children" call 800-407-6273 or 301-617-7825 (9-5 ET).

The following books are recommended for younger teens whose reading levels are lower than their grade levels. The books are realistic, but with a message of hope and survival.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
Darnell Rock Reporting	Walter Dean Myers, 1937
The Electric Kid	Garry Kilworth
The First Hard Times	Doris Buchanan Smith
Five Finger Discount	Barthe DeClements
Flip-Flop Girl	Katherine Paterson
The Great Gilly Hopkins	Katherine Paterson
I See the Moon	C. B. Christiansen
Last Was Lloyd	Doris Buchanan Smith
The Window	Michael Dorris
The Leaves in October	Karen Ackerman, 1951



THE JAN LINDSEY "I CAN DO IT!" ACHIEVEMENT AWARD NOMINATION

The Jan Lindsey "I Can Do It!" Achievement Award is sponsored by the Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation. Five awards will be given to deserving children who have made remarkable changes and improvements in their academic and/or personal lives. Those recognized will epitomize the "I Can Do It!" philosophy, recognizing the child's ability to overcome unique and common problems and obstacles that confront the foster child. Nominations are made by CASA Volunteers or CASA County Coordinators.

Look for your nomination forms in "Voices for Children," Newsletter" sent out by the State CASA Program Office.



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IF I DON'T SPEAK OUT, NOTHING WILL CHANGE

From a parent who lives in Kingston, NY

Recently I was asked why I would tell anyone that my son had an emotional handicap. After thinking for a while, I found my answer. If I said nothing, I would have nothing; no services, no help, no help for his future. No one would understand that he had a problem, they'd simply label him a bad kid and write him off.

By speaking out, I have helped him in many ways. I have gotten him special education services. I have helped set up a respite program for us and our kids. I have gone to Albany to help plead for funding for mental health services. I am now a part of a parent support group. We are learning to change the system to help our kids.

If I don't speak out, nothing will change. Only when all of us speak out can BIG changes be made. I refuse to hide my son in an attic as they did 100 years ago. Many changes have been made since then, let's help make more changes. Reprint from MIKID Newsletter, First Quarter 1998, Volume X, Issue 1. MIKID - Mentally Ill Kids in Distress can be reached at (602)253-1240.

MODEL COURT UPDATE

Eleven volunteers have taken model court cases since this process started January 3, 1999. Thank you to the following brave souls who have jumped right in and done a great job on these challenging new cases: **Lynn Baker, Judy Flanagan, Deborah Geringer, Rod Martin, Rita Myrann, Rose Ruth, Betty Saks, Donna Shemer, Mary Thomas, Karen Wells, & Becky Whittaker.**

Each of these volunteers had literally minutes to decide if they were going to accept their case and prepare for a hearing within one to three days. You have all done a great job in this system that is new to all the players. Hopefully it has been a good experience for you.

Three to four model court petitions are filed each week, and not all are selected for CASA assignment. Cases that have the Public Defender's Dependency Unit representing the children are not chosen because of the social work resources that are available. When cases are deemed appropriate for CASA assignment, a coordinator will contact volunteers who have previously indicated their interest in a model court case.

If you are still waiting for a case, you will get a call soon, but you may want to consider taking a non-model court case. If so, please contact your coordinator to discuss a good match for you.

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CASA STAFF UPDATE

Interviews have been completed for the recruiter and three coordinator positions. Four very qualified people have been selected to join the CASA team. Final confirmations are being processed. Look for formal announcements and introductions in April's newsletter.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

Lila Hanson	7	Beverly Buck	20
Rose Ruth	9	Patricia Spinelli	24
Teri Werner	10	Elizabeth Forton	25
James Lee	11	Margo Fitts	28
Jennifer Fail	11	Liz Osborn	30
Melissa Vaughan	12	Kathy Norton	30
Eileen Wells	15	Kathy Mucerino	30
Linda Anderson	15	Theresa Yanni	30
Hart Gottliebson	20		

HAVE A GREAT DAY!!!!



CASA PROGRAM
Juvenile Court Center
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*Two Children
Same family,
Same neighborhood,
Same school,
Same stress,
Same neglect,
Same abuse,
Sullen, withdrawn,
One shrinks,
The other grows,
Warm, popular.
One finds nourishment, the other hardens.*

What is the difference?

*One found a caring adult,
The other did not,
One was encouraged,
The other was not,
One was expected to succeed,
The other was assumed to fail.
One pops back, one stays down.
Both are children.
Both are the future.*

Author unknown